

Railroading and Socialism.

EDITOR ADVOCATE:—If the very broad meaning given to the term socialism in the ADVOCATE of December 13, is correct, every act of the state where self government exists is socialistic, the furnishing of a wagon road as much so as of a railroad, and further, the state can divest any of her functions of their socialistic character by simply appointing a private individual or corporation to act for her in the place of her government, yet both government and the corporation are her agents, one natural, with general powers, the other special, with specific powers and duties. It is not easy to see how this substitution changes the nature of the function.

Any private individual or company may mine, manufacture, farm, carry, buy, sell, lend and borrow, without an appointment or any special authority from the state to do so. But no private individual or corporation, can build, exclusively possess and operate a public road, turnpike, railroad, street railway, canal, pipe line, lighting plant, water-works, irrigating ditch, or reservoir, if the state's power to take private property for public use must be exercised in providing them, or if a public street or highway is used, except as the formally appointed agent of nation, state or municipality.

There certainly is a "vast difference in the government ownership and operation of a railroad under direct government management and the farming out of the franchise (contracting the state's power of eminent domain and of taxation) to a corporation" but the nature of the business remains the same, it is public and not private.

In order to have railroads it was not necessary to have railroad companies. We should have had as many miles of these highways if there never had been a railroad company. The state would have furnished them as she did the wagon roads and canals. Because physical conditions prevent the same freedom of individual use of a railroad as of the wagon road or canal is no reason why it is not as much the function of the state to provide the improvements which make it a railroad as the right of way, her contract with the company stipulating that it shall provide them.

It was not necessary for the state to give the companies power to locate the line of road and to empower them to take private property against the will of its owner for right of way and construction material. She might have had her government locate the line and furnish the right of way for the companies to improve.

But above all it was not necessary for the state to authorize the companies to fix and collect the taxes which are paid for the carriage of persons and property, as compensation for their services. Her government might have fixed and collected these taxes and paid the companies for their services instead of adopting the dangerous plan of allowing them to pay themselves.

All that the companies legitimately do in the furnishing and management of railroads is by express appointment of the state. In the words of the impotent Interstate Commerce Commission, "the railroad company can rightfully do nothing which the state itself might not do if she performed this function through her own agent." Yet there are things which the companies constantly do which if done by government in the operation of the roads no one but a particular beneficiary of the wrong would consider rightfully done, and which if any administration permitted to be done would bring

upon it such public condemnation as would quickly correct the abuse.

Whenever it is for the interest of the railroad companies or of their managers to discriminate between citizens in the use of the road in their charge they do not hesitate to do so through any fear of or respect for public opinion. And as public business no matter by what agent managed is from its nature a monopoly any discrimination in its performance in favor of the larger dealer tends irresistably to the creation of combines and trusts. The small dealer is at a disadvantage anyway because of lack of capital, but when, in addition to this drawback, he is discriminated against in a public service which he is under duress to employ there is a steady pressure forcing him to merge his interests and individuality in some combination.

Protective tariffs are much criticised as a cause of trusts and combines, because preventing foreign competition with domestic producers, but their agency in promoting combination is insignificant in comparison with discriminating railroad charges which prevent fair competition between our own citizens. That this is true is evident from the fact that in "free trade" England which farms out her railroad business as we do these combinations, and trusts flourish as they do in the United States. To enact laws against trusts while discriminations in public business exists is as futile as to legislate against the power of gravitation. Wherever the farming out practice exists it is the constant and most powerful enemy of individualism.

LEX.

A Shuffle Hard to Beat.

EDITOR ADVOCATE:—I see in the Topeka Journal an account of the affairs of the Santa Fe railroad, which says that the bonds of the company are principally held in Europe, while the stockholders, a majority of whom are women and children, are mainly citizens of the United States. This shows that the pirates who managed the road have sold the real ownership and value to foreigners, and then by bribing politicians, editors, preachers, administrators, trustees, etc., have unloaded the stock which has been watered, re-watered, and watered again, until it is worthless, upon our own citizens, 6,000 out of 11,000 stockholders being women and children. Now, that the interest of these native stockholders must be closed out, this same gang will be crying and slobbering over the losses of innocent purchasers. I see they have succeeded in getting J. C. Wilson, clerk of the United States court, appointed as one of the receivers. Truly, Joseph deserves promotion.

In looking over the list of grand and petit jurors drawn by the officials of the United States court for the session recently held at Ft. Scott, my attention was attracted to the fact that out of a number that I knew not one was a Populist, and yet the territory out of which this jury was drawn, polls a heavy Populist vote. An investigation of the entire list discloses four Populists out of the entire forty-four. There's a shuffle that is hard to beat, and I give the result thinking that parties who had judgments rendered against them at the last term might wish to look into it further. The territory from which these jurors were drawn consists of the counties of Miami, Linn, Bourbon, Crawford, Cherokee, Labette, Neosho, Allen, Anderson, Coffey, Woodson, Wilson, Montgomery, Chautauqua, Elk and Greenwood.

J. W. LEEDY.

Le Roy, Kas.

Co-operative Cooking Club.

This letter from Junction City, Kas., to the Kansas City Times will be of interest to many:

"The Junction City Co-operative Cooking club on January 4 enters upon its fourth year. It is in good condition financially, having always been carried on upon a cash basis. Its membership is full and its machinery is said to run easier than ever before, experience having taught the executive committee how to avoid various stumbling blocks. Many letters are received by the management asking, 'Why is it you succeed where so many others fail? Please give us your *modus operandi*.' To answer all would require the constant services of a paid secretary: therefore, as a rule, no replies are made. There was no objection, however, on the part of the management to giving your correspondent all the information desired.

"The society was formed because of the ever increasing difficulty of securing sufficient competent household help. There are at present thirteen families and a few individuals connected with the club, making in all forty members; average present, thirty-five. Ten of these families have belonged from the beginning, all are of the highest social standing and have homes of their own with the usual kitchen addenda, so that they could at any time return to the old way if they desired.

"The rooms rented are central for all and comprise kitchen, dining rooms and sleeping apartments for servants.

"A cook, assistant cook, dishwasher and two waitresses are employed; all are first-class and are responsible to the committee for their own department of work. There has never been any difficulty in securing young women of intelligence to fill these places; country school teachers unemployed, or those wishing to earn money to further their own education, have been willing to serve in the dining room. This is perhaps owing to the work being systematized, and also to the high character of the membership, which insures respectful treatment.

"The furnishings for diningrooms have all been brought from the homes, and are as dainty as the groups at the various tables desire to make them.

"Two hours is allotted for each meal, though there is generally an effort to be promptly on hand at the usual hour in order to share the social chat which at some of the tables is frequently up to the standard of Holmes' 'Autocrat.'

"The committee, composed of the matrons in the membership, meets on Saturday after lunch to audit bills, make contracts, interview employees, make change in the bill of fare, etc. Dues are \$3 per capita per week and are paid to the secretary in advance. Occasionally assessments have been made when the regular amount failed to meet requirements, but being reasonable have always been cheerfully met. During the past year, however, none have been necessary.

"Deductions are made for absences, and guests of members are paid for at the usual rates. The diningrooms are in no sense public, only members and their guests being admitted. The committee takes pains to please and members try to be reasonable, is the only cause they assign for the exceptional success of the institution which, they say, has solved for them the problem of securing the greatest amount of comfort with the least expenditure of money and anxious thought."

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Sheriffs and County Attorneys.

Two associations, the membership of which is made up of the county attorneys and the sheriffs of the state, held their meeting in Topeka last week. The object of these annual meetings seems to be a matter of sociability more than anything else, though the organizations have resulted in some advantage to the administration of their respective offices.

The sheriffs spent most of their time scoring Governor Lewelling for issuing what they call the tramp circular, and George L. Douglas for securing the passage of the foreclosure bill which in some cases cuts down sheriffs' fees. Their antagonism to these measures is easily accounted for. They are afraid the circular will cause them some extra trouble, and that the law referred to will curtail their incomes. The association is largely republican.

The county attorneys held their meetings in the supreme court rooms and their proceedings were more of a practical nature, whatever else may be said of them. They elected C. F. Hurrell of Jackson county to succeed Sam Kimball of Riley as president, and other officers as follows: Vice presidents, W. H. Morris of Crawford county, R. M. Sutherland of Jewell county, and U. B. McCormick of Phillips county; secretary, Frank Wells of Nemaha county; treasurer, A. H. Campbell of Allen county. They adopted the following.

Resolved, First—That this association urge upon the legislature the passage of an act providing a proper punishment for the violation of the laws now on the statute books providing for the assessment of property for taxation at its actual value and to insure the equal taxation of all property at its actual value and to insure the equal taxation of all property at its actual value, and further to insure that no more than two hundred dollars' worth of personal property at its actual value is exempted from taxation to the head of a family.

Second—That we have a revision of our road laws to the end that they be simplified in the matter of location of roads and the expense incurred, and the vacation of county roads be limited to where it is clearly shown that where the road sought to be vacated can never subserve the public interest.

Third—We recommend a revision of the gambling laws of our state.

Fourth—We urge the passage of a law by which persons confined in the county jail for nonpayment of fine and cost may give security for the payment of such fine and costs and be released from custody.

Fifth—We urge the enactment of a law prohibiting the sale of policy and lottery tickets and providing a penalty for the violation thereof.

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